

Next: Let's Ditch Some Labels!

We label everything in the society in which we live today. The way to truly determine who or what is important in our lives is to strip the labels off.

Let's look at a common example of how "the dreaded label" can really make your life tougher than it really needs to be:

In networking situations it has become fairly commonplace that everyone has a "30-second commercial." I will argue strongly that 30-second commercials are incredibly ineffective to the point that they hurt you more than help you.

Why? Let's dissect this for a moment.

30 seconds is way too much time to get a buy-in. You need to catch someone within the first few seconds. If you do not have my attention or interest in the first few seconds, you've turned into Charlie Brown's teacher..."wah, wah, wahaahhh, wah wah wah wahwahhhwahhhh wah." I might look like I'm paying attention. I might look at you and I might be making eye contact and nodding. Perhaps I am even making those noises we tend to make to try and give off the impression that we are even remotely interested in anything you are saying..."hmm, hmm, uh huh, ohh...sure..." But in reality, I'm not hearing a word you are saying. I don't care. And I've already made the determination that I don't need you or whatever you do, or I already know thirteen financial advisors, or CPA's, or insurance people.

When labeling starts, our filters kick in. Your filter is a stop sign and we filter constantly and unconsciously. It's just something that happens. It is our default.

OK...cut to the chase, Robin! The point of all this?

It is who you are not what you do that separates you from your self-imposed labels. Again, talk about people's filters. When we use labels, what happens?

People go to *their perception, not your reality.*

So I need to give you my reality, not the perception you're going to come up with based on what I say. For example, if you ask me what I do and I answer with, "I am a life coach and motivational speaker," I just put labels on me and now whatever those things mean in YOUR filter causes your response. If instead I said, "I help people get out of their own way," you may be more intrigued. You still do not have a clue as to what I do, but now your filter may have taken you to "I get in my own way all the time. How do you do that?" instead of "what the heck is a life coach? I certainly don't need that." It causes you to want more info, not me to try and sell you something. It either resonates with you or it does not, but there is no sales pitch involved. It is what it is.

Why is that important? It is all about you. People feel good when you have something they want. When their perception is that you are going to try and sell them something (all that takes is the mention of a label), they tune out. It cannot get more simple or more powerful.

Next: And You Are?

Too many people have an identity that they have created. It is not truly who they are. It has more to do with what they do. Of course, the problem with creating an identity is when a paycheck goes away or when a car goes away or when something goes away associated with that label, you've not only lost a material item but also your identity. A lot of people in our society are in a very vulnerable situation because of that. Let's be honest with ourselves...we are an impulsive, entitled group of people. We want things, we want things now, and we will not hesitate to promise away years of income we have not even made yet

to get it. Examples come in the form of cars that lose half their value the second you drive them off the lot, mortgages that stretch us out of our comfort zones, the latest technology gadgets (whether they enrich our lives or not), 412 channels on our cable systems, and \$4 cups of coffee just to name a few.

If you are married to the materialism of life, you will end up in a nasty divorce at some point. Your false identity will never sustain you. You are setting yourself up for failure if you are not being true to yourself.

So...who are you?

What could you be before someone told you that you could not? What could you be before YOU told yourself you could not? Think back to your childhood for a moment. Could you have been a super hero? Of course you could...all you had to do was put on a cape. Any old towel or blanket would do. Did you ever own a pair of shoes that made you run faster just because they were that cool? Sure, we all did. I could be a firefighter. All I needed was a bright red hat and a little imagination. I could be a ballerina. I didn't really need anything for that...other than my imagination. I could be the strongest person in the world. I could be an astronaut discovering new planets. I could be the smartest, best, fastest, most incredible anything I wanted to be. Why? Because I believed I could.

So...When did you stop believing? We all did at some point. Remember how you argued the first time someone told you those shoes could not make you run faster or that cape would not make you fly? "Yes they do!" we would yell. We could not fathom life without the impossible...simply because everything WAS possible. When did you stop believing in possibilities? We all did at some point.

Start believing in yourself again. Start right now! What will you look back on one day and regret that you never did? You are the only one who can prevent that from happening.

You cannot move forward until you switch off of "auto-pilot!" Pull out that super hero cape and imagine some possibilities!

"Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind."

-- Dr. Seuss --